

Remarks

Claims 1, 5, 7-11, and 20 are pending in the application. Claim 20 is newly added.

In a telephone conference between Examiner Rawlings and Henry Wixon on December 31, 2003, the Examiner explained that the Office action mailed December 18, 2002 was not intended to be a final Office action, as the Office Action Summary incorrectly indicated. Accordingly, the arguments presented May 19, 2003 were timely-filed. Applicants had sent Examiner Rawlings a copy of the response filed May 19, 2003, on August 27, 2003. However, the Examiner explained to Mr. Wixon that the amendment filed August 27, 2003 was improper for failing to comply with the revised amendment practice which became mandatory on July 30, 2003. Applicants received the Notice of Non-Compliant Amendment in which it was indicated only the corrected section of the non-compliant amendment, the "Amendments to the claims" section, must be resubmitted in its entirety.

Applicants respectfully submit that the amendment timely filed on May 19, 2003, a copy of which was sent to the Examiner on August 27, 2003, is compliant with this resubmission of the "Amendments to the claims" section. Early entry thereof is respectfully requested. If the Examiner has questions, he is encouraged to call the undersigned at the number listed below in order to expedite the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,



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